CULTURAL-BASED READING MATERIALS FOR VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL: STUDENTS' NEED ANALYSIS

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Abstract: English instruction provided in vocational schools (SMK) possesses distinct characteristics when compared to English instruction in general schools. Considering the vocational schools' objective of preparing students to compete effectively in the workforce, it becomes necessary to adapt the instructional materials to cater the student's specific needs. This research aims to identify the requirements of students in developing culturally-based English reading materials, as assessed from the perspectives of both students and teachers. A combination of questionnaires and interviews were employed to gather the necessary information. A comprehensive analysis, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative aspects, was conducted on the data collection. The findings of the needs assessment shows the following key points: 1) students continue to face difficulties in understanding what they read; 2) there is a demand for descriptive texts; 3) English reading materials should be integrated with content relevant to other subjects; and 4) no English reading materials currently exist that consider the student's local culture, specifically the Prabumulih culture. To fulfill these requirements, it is imperative to create supplementary reading materials that incorporate local culture, align with the students' reading proficiency, and support the subject matter effectively.
Keywords: *21st century learning; local culture; needs analysis; reading materials; vocational high school.*

INTRODUCTION
In the twenty-first century, English plays a multifaceted role in Vocational High Schools. Its significance extends beyond facilitating communication with individuals from other countries, as it also assists students in acquiring knowledge relevant to their chosen fields of study. The aim is to equip students with the necessary skills to effectively compete for employment opportunities after graduating from high school. Unlike senior high schools (SMA) in Indonesia, vocational high schools (SMK) have distinct characteristics. While senior high schools prepare students for further education at the college or tertiary level, vocational schools, as per BSNP (2006), have a curriculum specifically designed to prepare students for entry into the workforce. Consequently, the vocational high school places emphasis on developing students' readiness to excel in a particular occupational skill.

The instruction and learning of English in vocational high schools (SMK) exhibit variations compared to senior high schools. The instructional materials are specifically adapted to meet the students' needs based on their chosen fields of study. Teaching English in vocational high schools shares similar objectives with English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as stated by Richard (2001). Among the crucial skills to be mastered in English study is reading, which involves comprehending and extracting meaning from written materials. Khan (2023) highlighted in his research that reading is the objective of acquiring knowledge, which means it is a form of oral communication (a method of extracting information). Herawati et. al. (2020) assert that

reading skills, coupled with the advancement of print media as a communication tool, form the fundamental basis for students. Hence, it becomes essential for students to possess strong reading abilities as it enables them to access a wealth of knowledge to support their learning activities related to their respective fields of study.

In accordance with the 2013 curriculum for grade X SMA/SMK/MAK students, vocational high school students are introduced to various types or genres of reading texts, one of them is descriptive text. Descriptive text is a genre commonly taught and evaluated in national exams for vocational high school students. Due to its relevance to their majors, vocational students are required to study and enhance their proficiency in this genre. It is expected that students comprehend the content of the provided reading texts and continually improve their reading skills.

Learning resources play an important role in supporting student learning process to achieve a learning goal. Nowadays, a wide range of materials is available on the internet or in government-provided coursebooks and materials from specific businesses. When teaching English in the classroom, teachers often rely on coursebooks. However, not all teaching materials are suitable for students, especially in vocational schools. Fauzi and Hanifah (2019) found that a significant portion of the learning materials used in SMK were uninteresting and monotonous, failing to meet the students' needs. Consequently, students lacked enthusiasm to engage with the provided information, resulting in poor reading proficiency. Another study by Puspita et. al. (2017) highlighted the vocational students' need for basic and specialized English materials to communicate in the workplace, access job-related instructions and information, and acquire specific knowledge. Therefore, conducting a need analysis becomes the primary step.

Furthermore, the results of the need analysis provide important information that should be considered to meet students' demands (Oktarina et al., 2022; Inderawati et al., 2023)). As previously mentioned, several studies have explored the incorporation of local culture into reading materials, particularly in the tourism sector or culture (Azizah et al., 2020; Checaria et al., 2021; Elviana et. al., 2020; Nica et. al., 2021; Oktarina et al., 2022). In the case of Checaria et. al. (2021), their research focused on descriptive texts based on local culture of Palembang as supplementary reading materials.

According to Brown (2009), need analysis refers to the process of acquiring information about the specific requirements of a particular group within the industry or education sector. In the context of SMK, it involves gathering information about students' learning needs based on their study programs. Need analysis holds great importance in course design, especially in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as it serves as the initial stage in creating or developing instructional procedures (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define two types of requirements in need analysis: target needs and learning needs. "Target needs" refer to what students must accomplish in the desired situation, encompassing necessities, lacks, and wants. Necessities pertain to the essential knowledge students need about the target situation, lacks indicate the gaps or deficiencies between the current and target situations, and wants reflect students' expectations or the resources they require for effective learning. On the other hand, "learning needs" refer to the actions or tasks students need to undertake in order to study effectively.

Brown (2009) further describes various forms of language requirement analysis, including target situation analysis (TSA), deficiency analysis, present situation analysis (PSA), and strategy analysis. TSA focuses on the language requirements learners must fulfill when acquiring a new language, emphasizing their goals and needs. Deficiency analysis examines students' current needs and wants alongside the deficiencies or lacks in their target situation. PSA centers on assessing students' existing proficiency, knowledge, strengths, and weaknesses. Lastly, strategy analysis delves into students' preferences regarding learning techniques, error correction, group sizes, homework quantity, and other relevant factors.

Integrating culture is crucial when providing English teaching materials, particularly descriptive reading materials, as language and culture are inherently interconnected, as stated by Brown (1994). Another study by (Iroda et al., 2023) stated that in generally, language serves as both a medium of communication and a carrier of cultural aspects. Based on the result of study was done by (Iroda et al., 2023), stated that the process of acquiring a language is intricate and goes beyond learning the alphabet, vocabulary, and grammar. Drawing from the studies conducted by Monica and Vianty (2019), Sopian et al. (2019), Elviana et al. (2020), Nafiah (2020), and Oktarina et al. (2022), incorporating resources based on

local culture can both motivate and enhance learners' reading comprehension. It also involves acquiring knowledge of language content, including behavior and local cultural. It can be conclude that language is an integral part of culture, and culture is inseparable from language. Thus, incorporating local culture into English instruction becomes an essential aspect of foreign language learning. However, the majority of descriptive reading materials available in English textbooks do not consider students' prior knowledge.

Every place on earth possesses its own distinct culture, setting it apart from others. Local culture is specific to a particular society in a particular location (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018). In order to improve students' reading comprehension, furthermore, Wulandari, Vianty, and Fiftinova (2018) reported local culture can be used as learning resources. One effective way to increase students' motivation in learning a language in the class is by using local culture in the relevant situation (Fu, 2018).

When considering the utilization of local culture in providing descriptive reading materials for marketing majors, students can enhance both their knowledge of local cultures and their English language skills through reading these materials. This approach also serves multiple purposes, such as increasing students' comprehension of the content by relating it to their daily lives, fostering the development and practice of skills relevant to their field of study, promoting the local culture, particularly the Prabumulih culture, to a wider audience, including at the national level, and preparing students for their future workplaces after graduating from the marketing major.

The inclusion of elements related to the local culture in descriptive texts can effectively support students' learning based on their specific needs. Therefore, the author aims to create instructional reading materials on descriptive texts that are based on the local culture of Prabumulih and matched to the requirements of marketing major students. Prabumulih is renowned in South Sumatra for its diverse cultural heritage. According to Wikipedia, it is often referred to as the "City of Pineapples" due to the prominence of pineapple as a major agricultural product. Pineapple is prominently featured in various Prabumulih cuisines and crafts, both as a central ingredient and as a conceptual idea. This suggests that Prabumulih has abundant potential to promote and attract domestic and international tourists.

Students in the marketing major learn about various aspects of local culture within their content subjects. This study focused on aspects that align with their subjects, the English curriculum, and the types of cultures that need to be preserved, as outlined in the National Education Ministry Regulation of Indonesia No. 10 in 2014 and Indonesian Government Regulation No. 5 in 2017. The reading materials encompassed topics such as arts, foods, places, and customs from Prabumulih. These materials were designed to incorporate Prabumulih's local culture and include comprehension questions that align with the cognitive levels proposed by the 2013 curriculum. This approach aims to foster higher-order thinking skills in students, in line with the core skills of 21st-century learning, namely critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity (4Cs), and the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching medium.

Based on other studies and the introduction above, there was no specific research on Prabumulih's local culture in descriptive form that had the significant objective of increasing students' knowledge of their own cultural background.

METHOD

This research was a development research which is proposed by Akker (1999). Development research focuses on designing a product for specific purposes. Akker (1999) suggests three main phases in development research: analysis, design, evaluation and revision. In the analysis phase, various analyses were conducted to gather necessary information for developing the product, specifically reading materials. These analyses included instructional analysis, students' need analysis, and students' reading level analysis.

During the analysis phase, the authors addressed the instructional challenges and goals, while also identifying the learning environment and the learners' current knowledge and skills. In this phase, the instructional problem was pinpointed, along with an understanding of learner characteristics, their desired learning outcomes, and the methods by which they can achieve instructional goals and learning objectives.

The participants in this study were 36 tenth-grade students in marketing major and an English teacher from SMK Negeri 1 Prabumulih. Data collection involved the use of a questionnaire and

interviews. The students completed a questionnaire consisting of 25 questions divided into target situation analysis (TSA), deficiency analysis, present situation analysis (PSA), and strategy analysis. Additionally, a semi-structured interview was conducted with an English teacher to discuss the preparation of English reading materials based on the local culture. Data collection was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative method used to evaluate the questionnaire responses and the qualitative method employed to understand and characterize the interview content.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of students' need viewed by the students

The obtained data was relevant to the students' needs in target situation analysis (TSA), deficiency analysis, present situation analysis (PSA), and strategy analysis. This paper presents the data with the highest percentage representing the students' viewpoints.

Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

This section focused on the students' requirements, general intentions, and expectations regarding English learning. The data collection is presented in Table 1. Table 1 reveals that the primary motivation of learning English was the desire to communicate with other people (58.3%). This aligns with the objectives of vocational high schools outlined in the National Education Ministry Regulation of Indonesia No. 20 Year 2016. Furthermore, the students expressed their aspiration to communicate fluently in oral English within their future workplaces (50%). Most students aimed to utilize English for interacting with colleagues or tourists (52.8%). These findings highlighted the significance of attaining a high level of English proficiency (69.4%) to support their careers. As Marketing students, they needed to possess knowledge relevant to their study program, including their local culture. In the future, they would be required to explain and promote their local culture to domestic and international tourists as part of their job responsibilities. However, the data indicated that students' English proficiency was at a beginner level (55.6%). To address this, incorporating knowledge about their local culture into reading materials could be a valuable approach. As Petrovska (2001) suggested that integrating local culture into language teaching and learning could enhance students' new experiences, motivate them

through familiar content, and enable them to discuss their own culture using a foreign language for exchanging ideas, values, and knowledge.

Table 1. *TSA views of students*

No	Questions	Students' view	Percentage
1	The significance of English language acquisition	• For interpersonal communication	58.3 %
		• To enhance professional prospects	16.7%
2	The students' anticipated outcomes from English language learning	To engage in effective oral communication using English in upcoming situations	50%
3	The language employed for students' professional endeavors	To engage in fluent oral communication with coworkers or tourists	52.8%
4	The level of English proficiency required for students' professional pursuits	Beginner	55.6%

Deficiency analysis

This section examined the existing needs and requirements of students, as well as the gaps and deficiencies in their target situations. The data regarding current needs and student preferences were presented in table 2. The survey results indicated that 61.1% of students expressed a preference for reading materials focused on descriptive texts, as they believe it would support their program of study. Additionally, 38.9% of students expressed a desire for texts related to the context of the Marketing department, specifically Online Business and Marketing. Furthermore, 50% of students emphasized the importance of integrating topics that align with their overall reading program knowledge. Similarly, 50% of students highlighted the significance of incorporating their local culture, particularly the Prabumulih local culture. These findings were consistent with the research conducted by Azizah et al. (2020) and Oktarina et al. (2022) on the English needs related to local culture, where cultural tourism emerged as a prominent subject in students' reading materials.

Table 2. *Different viewpoints held by students regarding their present desires and requirements.*

No	Questions	Students' view	Percentage
1	Read topics of students' interest	Online Business and Marketing	38.9 %
		Prabumulih local culture	72.2%
2	The reading materials that students expressed a preference for.	A text that provided a description of the context in relation to Online Business and Marketing.	52.8%
3	Incorporating subjects that align with the students' overall knowledge.	Important	50%
4	Incorporating reading materials that revolve around the local culture of Prabumulih.	Very Important	72.2%

Moreover, incorporating local culture into reading materials was perceived by the students as beneficial for several reasons. It is shown in Figure 1. The majority of students expressed that integrating local cultures in their reading materials could enhance their motivation to learn English (Nambiar et al., 2020; Ainsworth et al., 2020). Additionally, it enabled them to deepen their understanding of their own culture, which contributes to their overall knowledge. When students had little interest in specific topics, their inclination to read diminishes. Hence, incorporating local culture into the learning process was important in stimulating their motivation to learn English. By providing relevant reading materials, students' reading skills could be significantly improved. Research conducted by Dehghan and Sadighi (2011) demonstrated that students who were familiar with a particular subject area performed better compared to those who were unfamiliar with it. Consequently, integrating local culture as a learning material could effectively enhance students' reading comprehension.
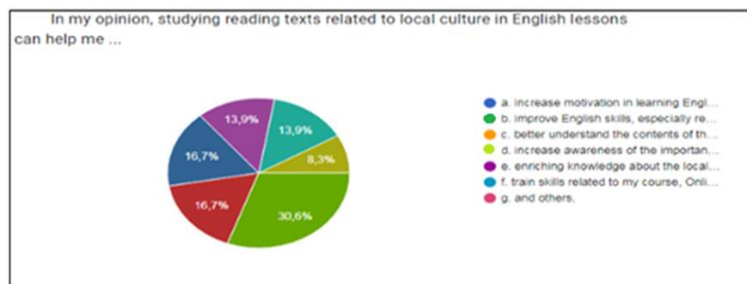

Figure 1. *The viewpoints of students regarding the significance of integrating local culture into reading materials.*

The survey findings presented in Figure 2 informed various aspects of local culture that students were interested in. The majority of students (30.6%) expressed a need to learn about local customs. Additionally, other aspects of local culture that were deemed important included art (25%), folklore (19.4%), and traditional costume and food (11.1%). This data provided valuable insights into the specific types of culture that should be integrated into the development of reading materials.
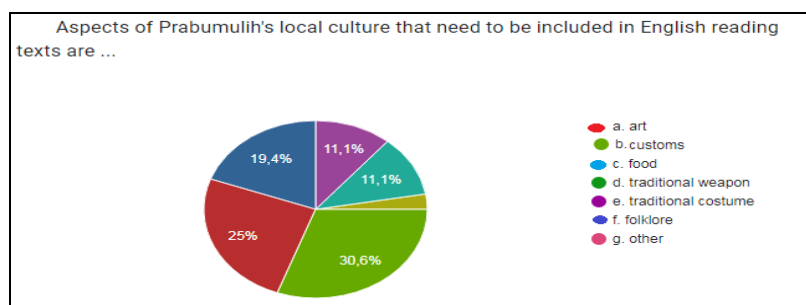

Figure 2. *The requirements or necessities of local culture*

Due to students' limitations, they encountered challenges in learning reading skills. Figure 3 presented the outcomes, indicating a range of difficulties faced by students. The statistics demonstrated that students' reading proficiency was not at a satisfactory level. The most challenging skill identified was understanding specific words (55.6%). Other difficulties included identifying main ideas (47.2%) and organizing events in chronological order (33.3%). The least encountered difficulties pertained to other aspects (33.3%). Consequently, it was recommended to consider both content and reading comprehension when developing reading materials.
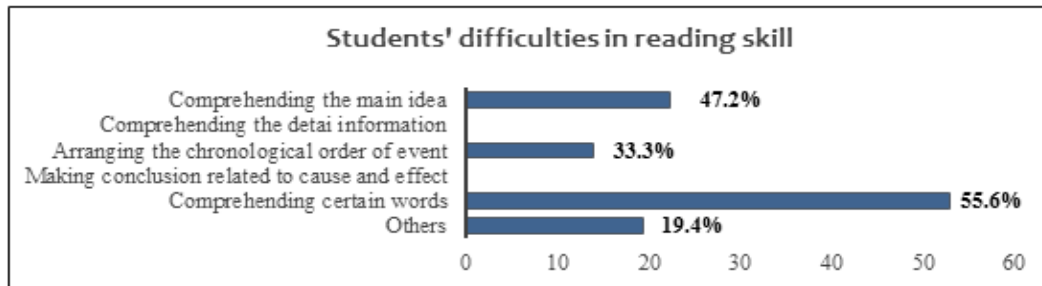

Figure 3. *Difficulties faced by students in the area of reading ability. Present Situation Analysis (PSA)*

This section centered on the English proficiency of students, the materials they studied, and their knowledge of local culture. Table 3 presented the students' perspectives on their English abilities. The majority of students (55.6%) acknowledged that their English proficiency was at a beginner level. Additionally, 47.2% of surveyed students considered their current reading proficiency to be sufficient. Based on the gathered data, it was evident that advanced reading materials could enhance the students' English proficiency, particularly their reading skills, to meet the higher level required to support their future careers.

Table 3. *The proficiency in English language among the students*

No	Questions	Students' view	Percentage
1	The existing level of English proficiency among the students.	Beginner	55.6%
2	The students' present level of understanding of the reading text.	Enough	47.2%

The students' perspective on the reading materials they had encountered or been provided with in school could be observed through the data presented in table 4. About 50% of the students found the reading texts in English course books to be challenging. However, 61.1% of students found the topics to be engaging. It was worth noting that 61.1% of students indicated that the most commonly encountered or learned text type in English learning was descriptive text, which typically involves describing people or animals. Based on the findings, it was found that 77.2% of students consistently studied descriptive texts primarily focused on Online Business and Marketing, which aligns with their study program's requirements for knowledge development. In addition, a few students noted that on certain occasions, English instructors supplied reading materials and associated queries pertaining to the overall understanding of their academic discipline. On the other hand, 47.2% of students noted that English teachers occasionally provided reading materials and questions specifically related to Prabumulih local culture. From this, it could be inferred that students rarely had access to reading materials that centered around their own local culture.

Table 4. *The materials that are currently being taught and supplied*

No	Questions	Students' view	Percentage
1	The level of difficulty of reading texts in the English coursebook.	Enough	47.2%
2	The subjects covered in the reading texts of the English coursebook.	Interesting	77.8%
3	The type of text	Descriptiv	61.1%

	frequently encountered or studied in English learning	e	
4	The frequency at which English teachers provide reading materials or texts and include questions specifically about the local culture of Prabumulih	Sometimes	41.7%
5	The frequency at which English teachers provide reading materials or texts and incorporate questions related to local culture for reading	Sometimes	72.2%

The data presented in table 5 reveals the students' evaluation of their current understanding of local culture. Around 38.9% of students expressed that they were satisfy with their knowledge of local culture. Among the different aspects of local culture, traditional food was the most recognizable to the students, with 30.6% acknowledging their familiarity with it. Furthermore, 27.8% of students indicated that their comprehension of local culture mainly stemmed from community traditions and practices. Moreover, 47.2% of students reported being acquainted with local culture limited to their own locality and neighboring districts. In addition, a notable 52.8% of students recognized that their understanding of local culture remained confined to basic facts and general knowledge. These results emphasized the significance of integrating learning materials that introduce local culture into the students' learning process.

Table 5. *The students' local culture knowledge*

No	Questions	Students' view	Percentage
1	Students' knowledge about local culture	Good	38.9%
2	The aspects of local culture that the students know	Traditional Food Folk song	36.1% 30.6%
3	The way students know about local culture	Community habits	27.8%
4	The scope of local culture that the students know	The area of students' live	47.2%
5	The students' knowledge level of local culture	General information	52.8%

The students' perspective on their understanding of local culture revealed various actions they believed could contribute to the preservation and development of their local culture. Figure 4 provides an overview of the activities that the students considered feasible.
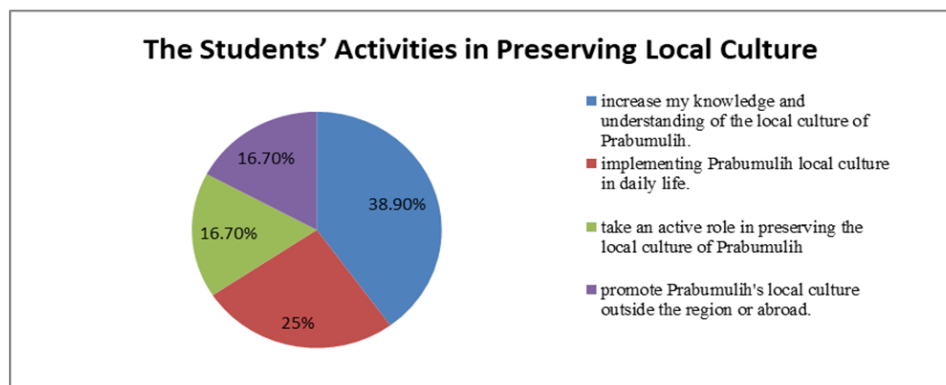

Figure 4. *The involvement of students in the preservation of local culture*

From the gathered data, it was found that 38.9% of students expressed their commitment to preserving and advancing their local culture by enhancing their knowledge and understanding of Prabumulih's local culture. Additionally, 25% of students wanted to implement local culture into their daily lives. These findings indicated that students had a genuine interest in deepening their understanding and safeguarding their local culture. Therefore, the development of reading materials centered around local culture can play a vital role in expanding their knowledge and fostering their awareness of their own cultural heritage, thereby promoting cultural literacy (Checaria et al., 2021).

Strategy analysis

In this section, the preferred learning methods for reading among the students were presented, as depicted in Figure 5. According to the data, 72.2% of students indicated a preference for comprehending the text through translation.

Additionally, 55.6% of students favored discussing the content of the text in a group as a way of learning reading, while 36.1% preferred reading and answering questions individually. Furthermore, 22.2% of students expressed their interest in reading aloud with correct pronunciation, and 33.3% showed a preference for analyzing new vocabulary within the context. It is important to take into account the students' learning preferences when designing reading strategies, as this can aid their learning process (Rhahima, et al., 2021; Tenridinanti, et al., 2021).
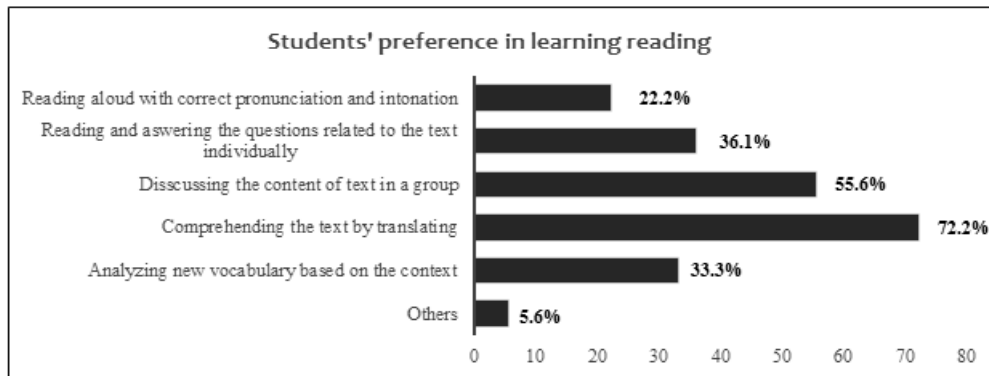

Figure 5. *The reading preferences of student*

The students' need viewed by the English teachers

In order to obtain a more comprehensive insight into the requirements of the students, an interview was conducted with an English teacher who teaches tenth-grade students. The results of the interview unveiled various elements that contribute to the students' inadequate reading skills. The prevailing pandemic has had a substantial influence on their motivation to learn English, resulting in a generally low proficiency level in the language. Furthermore, their enthusiasm for reading had diminished, and the allocated time for the English subject was insufficient, with only approximately 35 minutes per session.

The English teacher expressed agreement on the importance of integrating relevant subjects pertaining to general knowledge into the students' reading curriculum. The same applied to incorporating topics about local culture into their reading materials. It was evident from the interview that none of the English teachers assessed their students' reading ability. One possible contributing factor was the mismatch between the reading materials used and the students' reading level. Almost all the English teachers acknowledged the need for more suitable reading resources that catered to the students' proficiency and addressed their specific needs. Consequently, the students' reading achievements remained unsatisfactory and required improvement.

CONCLUSION

English is a fundamental subject for vocational high school students, serving as both a foreign language they need to learn and a tool they can utilize in their future careers. Therefore, all the materials used for English reading, especially for Marketing students, should align with their future needs. Conducting a thorough needs analysis is the initial step in determining the students' requirements.

Based on the identified needs of the students, as assessed by both the students and teachers, several essential strategies should be emphasized. The findings indicated that English holds immense importance for students as it equips them with effective communication skills and enhances their prospects for success in future employment. However, a significant number of students continued to face challenges in comprehending what they read. It was observed that students predominantly encountered descriptive texts during their English learning, thereby underscoring the necessity for a wider range of text types, including descriptive texts. Additionally, there was a need to integrate English reading materials with content subjects and create materials that incorporate the students' local culture. One limitation of relying solely on English course books was the absence of materials that cater to the students' backgrounds.

To address these issues, educators should consider expanding the repertoire of English reading materials to better align with the students' needs. Textbooks alone may not cover all the essential topics or provide the specific content that students require. Therefore, it is important to develop reading materials that encompass the students' local culture, match to their reading

proficiency levels, and relate to the content subjects (Inderawati et al., 2022).

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